

Weekly Highlights Report August 23, 2024

City Manager

- The Punta Gorda City Council adopted the Fiscal Year 2025 Strategic Plan during their meeting on Aug., 21. This plan, effective from Oct., 1, serves as a roadmap for the city's goals, departmental guidance, and budget formulation for the upcoming fiscal year. The Strategic Plan, referred to as "the Plan," is crucial for ensuring efficient and cost-effective operations. It reflects the city's commitment to thoughtful planning for future development and strategic direction. The Plan outlines both the city's vision and the community's expectations, offering a clear framework for achieving these objectives.



This document represents the culmination of a year-long effort to establish strategies vital to fulfilling Punta Gorda's mission: to preserve and enhance its identity as a vibrant waterfront community renowned for its unique character, rich history, and appeal as a place to live, work, and visit.

Core values guiding the City Council's decisions include community engagement, teamwork, partnerships, transparency, respect, exemplary customer service, and stewardship. The City Council and staff are committed to upholding Punta Gorda's historical heritage, maintaining historical sites and natural resources, supporting local businesses, and fostering an environment of fairness and equity for all residents.

The Plan incorporates metrics to measure the effectiveness of the city's strategies and includes a financial plan with multi-year fiscal forecasting. This forecasting helps project the long-term impacts of decisions, simulate various scenarios, and address potential financial issues proactively. The Long-Range Financial Plan, updated annually in January, ensures the city remains focused on both short-term goals and long-term sustainability.

The Plan is a living document adaptable to ongoing developments. The city provides regular status updates on its progress throughout the year. This Plan not only measures success but also allows the community to evaluate the city's performance.

A few of the major initiatives for the upcoming year include a flooding mitigation study for the Historic District to include recommendations and costs for improvements to drainage during rain and tidal events. Implementation of digital plans review software to improve processing efficiency. The addition of two advanced meter infrastructure technician positions in the Utilities department to repair and maintain water meters.

Engagement of the community to determine which projects should be proposed for funding through the 1% Sales Tax program.

Other initiatives include implementing new communications tool to engage the community in budget planning and conducting resident survey to ensure residents feel their voices are being heard. Conducting a needs study for a new Police Department to understand the department's policing strategies and opportunities available in the design of a new facility to promote those strategies. Determine current and future space needs and layout.

While maintaining its small-town charm, Punta Gorda's strategic priorities focus on financial and economic sustainability, infrastructure, partnerships, communication, strategic positioning, and quality of life. Each section of the Plan includes SMART goals—specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound—demonstrating how the city's mission will be achieved. For more information, the Strategic Plan is available on our website at www.cityofpuntafordafl.com. Residents can subscribe to the Weekly Highlights Report for updates on the FY 2025 Plan. *For inquiries, contact City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntafordafl.com or call (941) 575-3302.*

- **City Government Week** – Florida City Government Week, held annually in Oct., is a time for cities across the state to celebrate, showcase and engage citizens in the work of municipal government, and it is just around the corner! This is a great opportunity to engage with our community, learn more about how our local government operates, and participate in a variety of events. Please keep an eye out for more details about the activities and events we have planned. We encourage everyone to get involved and take advantage of this chance to connect with our city's leader and services. Mark your calendars, Oct. 21-27.
- **City Council Meeting** – City Council will meet at 9 a.m. on Sept., 4, at Military Heritage Museum, 900 W Marion Avenue.



Human Resources

- **Open Positions** – The City of Punta Gorda offers a very generous benefit package to include medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and a defined contribution retirement plan with matching contributions [Employment Opportunities | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](http://Employment Opportunities | City of Punta Gorda, FL (punta-gorda.fl.us)) Currently hiring for the following professional position:
 - **Utility Engineer – Utilities.** A professional position responsible for Utilities Engineering and providing technical engineering services for City utilities construction and improvement projects.
 - **Senior Accountant – Finance** – A professional position responsible for applying the principles of accounting to analyze financial information and prepare financial reports by compiling information, preparing profit and loss statements, and utilizing appropriate accounting control procedures.
 - **Zoning Official – Urban Design** - A supervisory professional responsible for administering the City's codes as they relate to property zoning, design, and maintenance standards.



- **Permit Technician – Building** - An entry level clerical position responsible for accepting and processing applications for building permits, issuing permits, and collecting and accounting for payments and fees collected by the Building Division.
- **Sanitation Worker 1 – Public Works** - An entry level laborer position responsible for solid waste collection services to residents and businesses of Punta Gorda.
- **Operator A, B, or C – Water Treatment Plant** - A skilled and licensed technical position responsible for the proper plant operation and monitoring of the treatment process of a Water Treatment Plan.
- **Manager - Mapping, Permitting and Compliance – Engineering, Public Works** a highly technical position responsible for planning, programming, and managing construction projects and infrastructure asset management systems.
- **Sanitation Worker I – Sanitation, Public Works –** An entry level laborer position responsible for solid waste collection services to residents and businesses of Punta Gorda.

Survival Kit Supplies

- Water: one gallon per person, per day (three-day supply for evacuation, two-week supply for home)
- Food: non-perishable, easy-to-prepare items (three-day supply for evacuation, two-week supply for home)
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Medications (seven-day supply) and medical items
- Multi-purpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- Emergency blanket
- Map(s) of the area



Urban Design

Upcoming Events

- Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor St. For additional information, visit charlotteharborecc.com/events
- Fishermen's Village events can be accessed at [PLAY | Fishermen's Village | Punta Gorda, Florida \(fishermensvillage.com\)](http://PLAY | Fishermen's Village | Punta Gorda, Florida (fishermensvillage.com))
- Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce events can be accessed at Community Events – Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce
- Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce events can be accessed at Event Calendar | Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce, Inc.



- Military Heritage Museum events can be accessed at [Upcoming Events - Military Heritage Museum](#)
- Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, 2001 Shreve Street; for all community events and class information, visit [Home - Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, Inc. \(pgica.org\)](#)
- The Visual Arts Center events can be accessed at [Visual Arts Center \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)

Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed the Mowing, Trimming and Edging cycle.
- The City will begin a new mowing cycle on Aug., 26, weather permitting.

Planning Corner

- On Aug., 8, Urban Design staff attended the Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Partnership (CHNEP) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting for the first time as a designated member. Urban Design staff has an opportunity to vote on and provide input to the CHNEP regarding proposed policies concerning research and restoration of Charlotte Harbor and its watersheds. The TAC convenes three times a year and has around twenty members from different governmental and research institutions in the CHNEP area, which extends 5,416 square miles from Florida's Gulf Coast to Florida's Heartland, including all or part of ten counties (see map). The August meeting finalized the TAC's review of the draft Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), CHNEP's guiding policy document that is updated every five years. One of the big adds to this CCMP update was the use of biological indicators (such as mangrove and salt marsh health) to establish ecosystem health trends and to track the changes caused by sea level rise and shoreline hardening. For more information on this and other CHNEP TAC meetings, please visit: [CHNEP Technical Advisory Committee](#).



Public Works

- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Maintenance crews filled depressions at 55 residences, and repaired eight seawall caps.
- **Dockside Dredging** –Property owners that are listed on the Hurricane Ian Seawall Damage list will not be allowed to have dockside dredging performed adjacent to the seawall until the seawall has been repaired. Any dredging along the damaged seawall may cause damage.
- **Stabilizing Erosion** – Just a friendly reminder for property owners to regularly check the condition of their tarps or plastic that is protecting the eroded areas. Tarps and plastic tend to become brittle in the sun and may start falling apart. Utilizing plastic during a rain event will help keep the soil in place preventing further erosion.

- **Canal Maintenance Seawall Failure Update** – Construction schedules have been updated and are posted on the Canal Maintenance website for the next six months look ahead. There are 20 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 122 projects completed, and three projects under construction with 11 completed in Burnt Store Isles. Phase two has started in the SW Zone. Hurricane Ian Related Seawall Failures | [Hurricane Ian Related Seawall Failures | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](#)
- **Establishing sod after seawall replacement** – Placing the sod is the final phase of seawall replacement construction. As per the City ordinance, property owners are responsible for establishing the sod after it has been placed and the City will not reimburse the owners for their water usage.
- **Vessel Speeds** – Canal Maintenance is asking people to be mindful of the current situation in the canals with seawalls being damaged. City code states that the operation of vessels in the canals shall be Slow Speed Minimum Wake in the waterways within the City limits. The speed and operation in the Ponce Inlet, Pompano Inlet, Bass, and Snook Inlet are Idle Speed and No Wake. Wakes from watercraft can cause additional erosion and damage to seawalls already compromised.
- **Dock Match Program** – The Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor Boaters Alliance has created a program that connects boat owners who need a temporary relocation of their boats with owners that have available dock space. This information can be found at [Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance \(boat2puntagorda.org\)](#) click on the Dock Match button for information.

Engineering

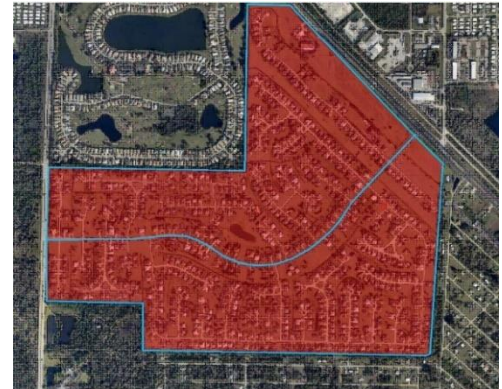
- **Swale Regrading** – The Engineering Department has performed the yearly swale inspection City wide. The employees have installed GoPros on their trucks and have driven every street with-in City limits after a 72-hour period with no rain to record videos of all the swales. Now the Engineering department will review the videos to create the 2024-2025 swale re-grading list.
- **City Hall Annex** – The contractor has completed the interior work on the third floor where Urban Design, Code Enforcement, Zoning, IT, and City Manager offices are. The Procurement, Billing, and Building departments have moved to the third floor. There are signs for residents and contractors to use the elevator to conduct business there. The contractor has begun the full restoration on the second floor in the Procurement, Billing/Collections, and Building department. They have painted the entire second floor, installed all new ceiling tiles, and have completed the installation of the new flooring throughout the building besides the Human Resource department. The Human Resource department will begin the restoration next week.
- **City Hall Annex Roof** – The contractor has finished installing the last torch down material to the roof. They will be installing the sheet metal for the ridge cap next week and will be calling in the final inspection.
- **Laishley Splash Pad** – Construction continues at the Interactive Fountain area in Laishley Park. This work includes rehabilitation and upgrades to the splash pad/play area. Play equipment installation is nearing completion.



Please use extra caution while driving or walking through the park due to construction personnel and equipment. To the highest extent possible the restroom facilities will remain open to the public. The access for the restrooms will be from the marina side of the building. There will be periodic temporary sidewalk closures immediately adjacent to the construction area as required for public safety. The construction area will be closed to the public at all times during this period. The enhanced fountain area is scheduled to reopen in late 2024. If you have any questions, please contact the Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 during the hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



- **Fiber Optic Internet Network** - The fiber optic provider HyperFiber has been issued permits for a portion of the construction project to install a citywide fiber optic internet network within the city right of ways. This project will be under construction during the next several months as they install the network citywide. They are currently permitted to work in the areas highlighted in red below. The green areas are where the work is completed and their permit has been inspected for final by the engineering department. Additional areas are scheduled to be final in the next several weeks. The blue areas are where installation will be taking place as the project progresses. Construction is beginning in Burnt Store Isles and Burnt Store Meadows.



Initially you will see utility markings within the city right of way, followed by the directional drilling of the fiber optic conduit. Fiber optic boxes will be installed in the right of way or easement at the edge of your property. Once the installation of the underground and service points has been completed for the entire sector, crews will then return to individual locations for the restoration of sod. This will take place at the end of construction in each sector. Please be patient and allow time for the restoration. The city engineering department will be performing spot inspections during construction as well as a final inspection on when restoration is complete to ensure the contractor's restoration meets the city's requirements.



HyperFiber has provided a telephone number to call if citizens have questions or concerns about the project and installation. Please contact HyperFiber's Lori Haight at (501) 844-6340. Please use extra caution while driving through the project area due to construction personnel and equipment.

- **Peace River Wildlife Center** – Construction has begun for the Peace River Wildlife Center located next to the Hounds on Henry Dog Park! This work includes the development of the wildlife center and the expansion and reconstruction of the parking lot for the Hounds on Henry Dog Park.



Please use extra caution while driving or walking through this area due to construction personnel and equipment. Please obey the newly installed stop signs as dump trucks are delivering fill dirt at the rate of approximately 30 loads per day. These trucks require a wide turn area, and vehicles should give them plenty of room to maneuver. The fenced construction area will be closed to the public at all times during this period. If you have any questions, please contact the Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 during the hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Right of Way

- Crews continue to mow around the city. Mowing on East Olympia Ave is completed.
- Crews repaired several potholes on Magdalena Dr, West End, and Trumpet Tree.
- Repairs have been made to several decorator lights at Gilchrist Park and Linear Park.
- Debris along the Wisteria bridge has been removed. This has allowed for better visibility to traffic.

Sanitation

- **Trash, recycling, and yard waste must be placed curbside by 5 a.m. on the day of collection** – Our sanitation workers strive to maintain a routine in which residents would be serviced roughly around the same time each collection day. However, sanitation encounters problems from time to time such as trucks being down for service, staffing issues, or weather conditions. In order to maintain the best level of service, we kindly ask residents to have trash, yard waste, and recycling curbside either the night before or prior to 5 a.m. on the day of service. Staff is not always available to return the same day to collect a late put-out during these instances. Thank you for your continued cooperation. For more information regarding solid waste [Solid Waste, Trash, Yard Waste | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us)
- **Small Loose Yard Waste** – Palm fronds, limbs, and other debris must be cut into four-foot sections and tied or bundled for collection. The bundle must not exceed 35 pounds. Staff has brochures that are left for residents that are unaware of the guidelines. If your debris is left with a brochure, please follow the instructions for the next yard waste collection. The rules have NOT changed.
- **Yard Waste Containers** – Small loose yard waste, leaves, and grass clippings may be placed inside of a container or paper bag. Containers should not exceed 32 gallons in size or weigh more than 35 pounds and must have handles. We would prefer the containers to have a lid, wheels, and metal bar across the front to be compatible with the tippers on the trucks. If your yard waste container is not picked up on your regular yard waste day, please check the weight. It is commonly left behind if the crew members are unable to safely lift the container and it exceeds the weight limitations.

Police

- **15-Year Service Award** – Congratulations to Master Police Officer Joseph Angelini on receiving his 15-Year Service Award at Wed's., City Council meeting. Officer Angelini joined the Punta Gorda Police Department in 2009 after retiring from the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office. He is currently assigned to Sallie Jones Elementary School as the school resource officer.
- **Promotions and Recognition** – Chief Pamela Smith announced the promotion of two officers this week. Detective Corporal Martin Meddaugh was promoted to 1st lieutenant, and Detective Taylor Smith was promoted to corporal. Congratulations to both.

In addition, Vince Matteini has met all the required criteria to be recognized as a Master Police Officer. Congratulations MPO Matteini.



OPEN POSITIONS

- **Police Officer Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. A virtual testing process will take place in August. Applications must be received by Sept., 27. The written exam will be completed online between Oct., 4 and Oct., 11 and virtual oral board exams will be conducted via Zoom on Oct., 24. The department is accepting applications from certified and non-certified candidates.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The police department continually conducts new hire testing to prepare for future openings. Currently, the department is accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. The exam will be held virtually between Oct., 11 and 18. Applications must be received by Oct., 4.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Spring Semester of 2025. Our internship program is open to college students and high school seniors interested in gaining educational experience in law enforcement, criminal justice, and small government administration. Spots fill up quickly and the selection process can be competitive, so we encourage potential interns to apply today! To apply for employment or more information, please visit [Employment Opportunities | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us/employment) or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.

Fire

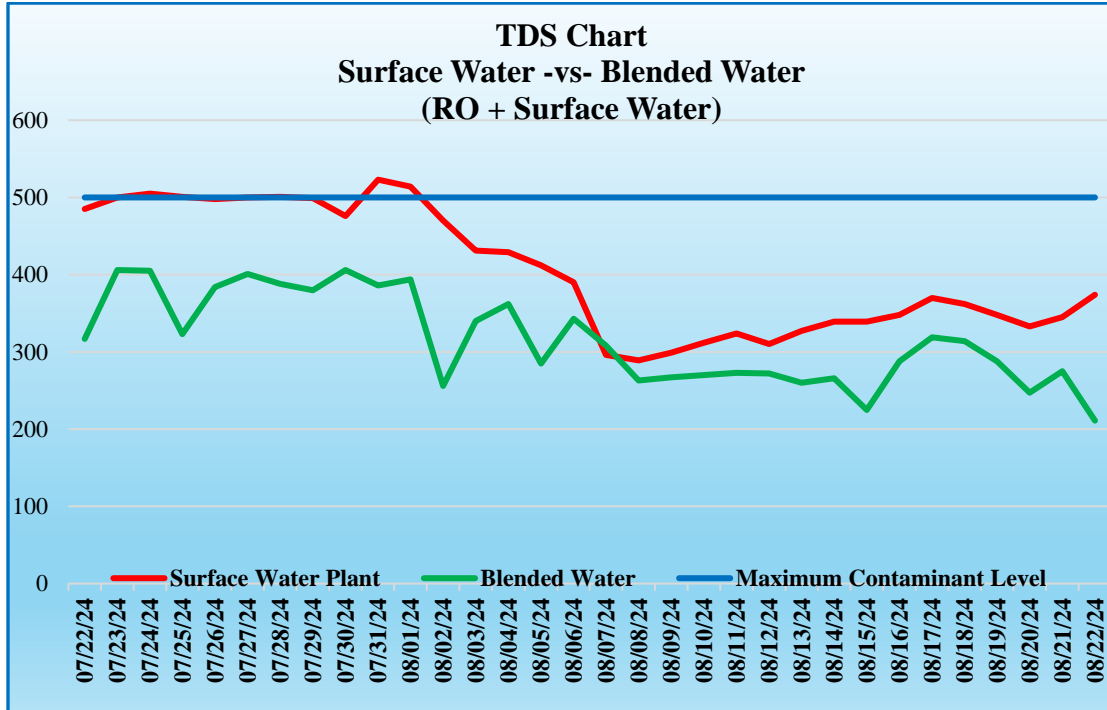
- **Fire Department Dive Rescue** – This week fire department crews started a dive rescue module at South County Pool. We utilized our PVC car prop to simulate a car in the water with an occupant entrapped. Crews dove down utilizing, blacked-out masks our Rescue Diver gear extricated the patient and brought them to the service for treatment. These training exercises give our firefighters the confidence and a chance to practice these types of special operations and ensure they are ready to act if ever called upon.

Crews also participated in a refresher training with GIS Analyst Todd Helt on the use of our Survey 123 application. This valuable tool helps crews report damaged areas immediately after a storm. They can forward pictures and locations utilizing GPS coordinates so workers can make access to the most affected areas and clear roadways to get residents the help they need.



Utilities

- **R.O. + Surface Water**



Administration

- **Leaks** – If you notice a water or sewer leak outside of normal business hours please call the after-hours number (941) 575-5070 or the Water Treatment Plan at (941) 639-2057.

- **Water Treatment Plant Operations** – 48.6 MG delivered to the distribution system during the last seven days with 6.9 MG daily average.
- **Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect** – Receiving 1000 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 1000 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall August 2023 – 9.01" August 2024 – 6.11"
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 7 –Total hardness 120 ppm
- T.D.S. Aug., 22 – Current 211 ppm. Low – 211 ppm, High 399 ppm, 14-year average 318 ppm.
- Reservoir Aug., 22 – Current 5.71, Record Low 5.14, Record High, 6.18' 58 Year Average 5.57'



Lawn Watering

- **Phase I Water Shortage** – The Southwest Florida Water Management District's (District) Governing Board declared a [Phase I Water Shortage](#) for the District's central and southern regions, which include Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota counties. The primary purpose for a Phase I water shortage is to alert the public that watering restrictions could be forthcoming. The order also requires local utilities to review and implement procedures for enforcing year-round water conservation measures and water shortage restrictions, including reporting enforcement activity to the District. A Phase I water shortage order does not change allowable watering schedules, however it does prohibit "wasteful and unnecessary" water use. [Water Restrictions | City of Punta Gorda, FL](#)
- **Lawn Watering Schedule/Times** – Lawn watering is limited to twice per week (if needed) by property address. Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. Hand watering and micro-irrigation of plants (other than lawns) can be done on any day and at any time using a shut-off nozzle on their hose, so water isn't wasted. For more irrigation and water saving tips, please visit the District's website at [WaterMatters.org/Water101](#). [Water Restrictions | City of Punta Gorda, FL](#)

Addresses ending in 0 and 1	Monday & Thursday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
Addresses ending in 2 and 3	Tuesday & Friday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
Addresses ending in 4 and 5	Wednesday & Saturday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
Addresses ending in 6 and 7	Thursday & Sunday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
Addresses ending in 8 and 9	Friday & Tuesday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
Addresses ending in letter or Location without a discernable address	Friday & Tuesday	Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.

City Clerk

2024 Election Cycle

- The seats for Districts 1, 2, and 4 are scheduled for election this year. A general election will take place on Nov., 5, as two candidates qualified for each district. Qualified candidates are listed on the [City's website](#).
- Did you know your signature can change over the years? Ensure the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections has an up-to-date record of your signature on file for the upcoming election. Stop by their office at 226 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda, Florida, 33982, to update yours during regular business hours.

In order to vote by mail, you must have a valid request on file with the Supervisor of Elections Office. Requests for vote-by-mail ballots can be made in person, by calling (941)833-5400, or by visiting the [Supervisor of Elections website](#).

Business Tax Receipt Renewals

- City business tax receipts must be renewed for Fiscal Year 2024/2025 prior to Sept.,30, or else a late fee will be assessed. The first and second renewal notices have been emailed to the address on file with the City Clerk's Office on July 8. If you have not received an emailed renewal reminder, please call the City Clerk's Office at (941)575-3369 or email businesstax@cityofpuntagordafl.com to update your email address.

- **Current Board and Committee Vacancies**

If you are interested in serving on a board or committee, please visit our online portal to complete an online application at [City of Punta Gorda, FL: Board Application \(granicus.com\)](#)

- **Building Board** (one consumer advocate, one contractor, and one alternate) – Meets the fourth Tues., at 9 a.m. in Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms – maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more terms. Reviews enforcement of all codes related to construction standards and acts as condemnation board in matters of violation of minimum standards. Hears alleged complaints against contractors.
- **Donation Review Committee** (one historic non-profit representative) – Meets at 10 a.m. in City Council Chambers on the fourth Thurs., of Jan., April, July and Oct., or as needed, immediately following the meeting of the Historic Preservation Advisory Board. Charged with review of all non-monetary gift donation proposals/letters of intent received by the City, in accordance with the review process and established criteria identified in the Non-Monetary Donation Policy. Makes recommendations to the City Council for the acceptance or rejection of non-monetary gift donations.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** (one alternate) – Meets the fourth Thurs., at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms - maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more terms. Identifies for the Council historically significant structures and sites that should be considered for designation as a “Local Historic Landmark” or be nominated for listing on the Florida Master Site File and the National Register of Historic Places. Makes recommendations of the policies for the protection of historically significant structures and sites. Makes recommendations to staff with regard to certificates of appropriateness for any demolition, variance, sign, or relocation of structures. Promotes public awareness of historic archaeological preservation and its community benefits.
- **Utility Advisory Board** – (one regular) Meets the fourth Mon., at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Seven-member board. Three-year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council with regard to revisions to the utility construction standards, alleged billing discrepancies, and review of utility drawings and specifications.

New Businesses

- All persons, firms or corporations engaging in business or occupation within the City of Punta Gorda are required to obtain a local business tax receipt in accordance with Chapter 12 of the Punta Gorda City Code. As part of our effort to promote economic development and vitality in our area, we offer the following list of new or transferred business within our community this week:
 - Crystal Lacen LMT – Massage Therapy, 425 Cross Street, Unit 216